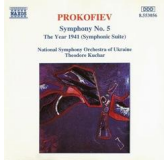


Prokofiev – Symphony No. 5, The Year 1941 (1995)

Written by bluesever

Sunday, 25 October 2009 15:31 - Last Updated Sunday, 23 March 2014 10:00

Prokofiev – Symphony No. 5, The Year 1941 (1995)



The Year 1941, Op. 90 1. *I. In the Struggle* 00:04:37 2. *II. In the Night* 00:04:19 3. *III. For the Brotherhood of Man* 00:06:04
Op. 100 4. *I. Andante* 00:13:39 5. *II. Allegro marcato* 00:09:10 6. *III. Adagio* 00:12:15 7. *IV. Allegro giocoso* 00:09:43
National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine Theodore Kuchar - conductor

Written in 1944, Prokofiev's Fifth Symphony is one of his greatest and most complete symphonic statements. At its première he himself called it "a symphony of the grandeur of the human spirit". The first movement couples considerable strength with unexpected yet highly characteristic twists of melody. After a violent scherzo followed by a slow movement of sustained lyricism, with a fiercely dramatic middle section, the finale blazes with barely suppressed passion. The Year 1941 is another wartime work, a symphonic suite written in response to the German invasion of the Soviet Union. This is the first volume a of complete cycle of the Prokofiev Symphonies with the OSESP and Marin Alsop, the orchestra's newly appointed principal conductor. --- naxos.com

Beyond all argument, Prokofiev's Symphony No. 5, Op. 10, is his biggest, his grandest, and his greatest symphony, a massive and monumental work that celebrates the triumph of all that is decent and virtuous over all that is depraved and immoral. But while Prokofiev's symphonic suite The Year 1941, Op. 90, is perhaps not his loudest and dumbest symphonic work, it is as bathetic, as bombastic, and as banal as the Symphony No. 5 is good, decent, and virtuous. The great thing about this disc is that both works are on it and both works get the best possible performances from Theodore Kuchar and the National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine. In the case of the Symphony No. 5, their performance is as massive and monumental as the work itself, with a clarity, strength, and optimism that is positively overwhelming. In the case of The Year 1941, their performance is, fortunately, nowhere near as bathetic and banal as the work itself, but there isn't much they can do about the bombast that is unfortunately built into the music. But with Naxos' superb recording, even the bombast sounds as musical as it ever will

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and with Kuchar and the Ukraine's performance, even the music sounds as good as it ever will.
---James Leonard, Rovi

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